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# General and complete disarmament: Missiles

## Report of the Secretary-General

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# I. Introduction

1. In operative paragraph 1 of its resolution 54/54 F of 1 December 1999, entitled "Missiles", the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of all Member States on the issue of missiles in all its aspects, and to submit a report to the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session.

2. The present report is submitted in response to that request. To date, five Member States have replied. Their responses are reproduced in section II. Any replies received subsequently will be issued as addenda to the present report.

# II. Replies received from Member States

## India

[17 May 2000]

1. India favours a global, non-discriminatory and step-by-step approach to this important and complex subject. India has taken note of recent initiatives on this issue, including General Assembly resolution 54/54 F and the proposal of the Russian Federation for a "Global Control System" for missiles. These initiatives reflect what has been termed by the Ministerial Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Cartagena, Colombia, in April 2000 as "the need for a comprehensive approach towards missiles, in a balanced and non-discriminatory manner, as a contribution to international peace and security".

2. To date, security challenges relating to missile proliferation have been met with selective and discriminatory approaches consisting mainly of technology denial regimes. In recent years, missile defence systems have also been put forward as a response, but the shortcomings and risks associated with that approach are becoming increasingly apparent. Similarly, selective regional approaches have proven to be inappropriate and ineffective given the ranges of missiles, the strategic impact of the weapon systems they can deliver, as well as the increasing missile proliferation linkages across regions.

3. There is today a need for a global, inclusive, non-discriminatory and genuinely multilateral arrangement to deal with the issue of missiles in all its aspects. In this regard, the initiatives noted above may allow the international community to engage in an inclusive and constructive process of consensus building, with a view to arriving at such an arrangement.

4. India believes that these efforts should take place in the framework of wider national and international efforts for disarmament and non-proliferation and should build on and make use of past discussions on this issue in the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in the Outer Space. India also believes that it would be useful, as part of a step-by-step approach, to begin with measures that enhance transparency and build confidence. Such measures should lend greater predictability to developments in this area and promote equal security for all without losing sight of overall disarmament and non-proliferation goals. They should also strengthen the norm against proliferation of missiles while ensuring that civilian space applications are not adversely affected.

## Japan

[5 June 2000]

The proliferation of missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction is a matter of major security concern to Japan as well as to the international community as a whole. Thus, Japan attaches a high degree of interest to strengthening the international efforts for the prevention of missile proliferation. The Missile Technology Control Regime plays a key role in this respect.

## Jordan

[Original: Arabic]
[8 May 2000]

1. The issue of disarmament in general and of guided missiles in particular depends on the position of States Members of the United Nations and the degree to which they are prepared to take practical steps to promote the role of the United Nations in the field of arms regulation and disarmament.

2. Jordanian policy consists of definitive and ongoing emphasis on the promotion of confidence-building measures and the need for the promotion of

regional and international peace and security, particularly with regard to making the Middle East a region free from weapons of mass destruction. Jordan is a State free from weapons of mass destruction, and it has no intention of producing, purchasing, transporting or utilizing such weapons.

3. There appears an urgent need for a comprehensive approach to this topic that accords with the security and defence needs of Member States and does not present a threat to any third party.

4. We believe that no progress will be achieved in this field without the achievement of the comprehensive and global peace to which the States of the Organization aspire and which requires a redoubling of international efforts towards the adoption of more open policies through successful diplomacy that may lead to the creation of a kind of mutual understanding and confidence among Member States, at the regional and the international levels alike. Such policies would seem to require common ground among States of common interests the conservation and promotion of which is the concern of all parties.

## Qatar

[Original: Arabic]
[2 May 2000]

### Introduction

1. As you are aware, there are many kinds of missiles, differing in design and in performance. We note that in the fields of space science and the uses of space applications for purposes of scientific research and development, a group of special missiles have been employed to launch space ships and vehicles and to give them the necessary power to escape the effects of the Earth's gravity. Similarly, types of missiles are used to launch large-scale satellites into orbit in outer space, while others are used for purposes of destruction and striking various targets during wars and military operations.

2. From the contents of the letter from the United Nations on this topic, it appears to us that the purpose of seeking the views of Member States on the issue of missiles does not relate to types of missiles that are non-conventional with regard to their potentials, overwhelming destructive capacity, technological features or the carrying of warheads consisting of weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, chemical or bacteriological (biological)). We shall therefore confine our comments to tactical and strategic ballistic missiles, because they present the new threat to many States of the world, particularly since the technology of these very powerful weapons has now come into the possession of many third world States. South-East Asia and the Middle East saw widespread use of surface-to-surface ballistic missiles during the Afghanistan war, the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, the Iran-Iraq war and, lastly, the operations for the liberation of the fraternal State of Kuwait.

### Dangers of the proliferation of ballistic missiles

3. The technology of tactical and strategic ballistic missiles, as well as guidance and radar systems controlling the course of such missiles, have been developed by means of computers so as to ensure increased accuracy. They can carry numerous warheads, including conventional, nuclear, chemical and bacteriological (biological). Many States have been competing in the race to acquire ballistic missile technology, and the race is not confined to the major States but includes others in the region, such as India, Pakistan, Israel and Iran.

4. Ballistic missiles are proliferating at great speed among a number of States in various parts of the world, including the Middle East. The danger of this type of missile is that it threatens the capitals of States and is used for reprisal operations against cities. The Iran-Iraq war and the second Gulf War saw extensive use of Iraqi surface-to-surface Scud missiles, and, although the Iraqi missiles that were launched had no material effect either on the course of events or on the outcome of the war, they had a moral effect on the urban population, particularly with regard to rumours that they carried chemical or bacteriological (biological) warheads.

### Types and characteristics of ballistic missiles

5. The various types of ballistic missiles may be defined as tactical or strategic. There is agreement that tactical ballistic missiles are divided as follows with regard to range and function.

(a) Battlefield missiles. The range of these surface-to-surface missiles is anything less than 1,000 kilometres, and they carry conventional warheads.

(b) Theatre ballistic missiles. Their range is greater than 1,000 kilometres and less than the range of

strategic missiles. They carry nuclear warheads, like the Russian SS-4 and SS-20 missiles and the American Pershing II missiles.

(c) Short-range tactical ballistic missiles carried by fighter aircraft, which fire them from distances far beyond the range of anti-aircraft fire. For example, the American B-52 aircraft in the second Gulf War fired missiles having a range of 200 kilometres from high altitudes, and the F-117 stealth aircraft operates on the same basis.

6. The proliferation of tactical ballistic missiles is due to the ease of their development or purchase and their low price by comparison with the very high cost of aircraft, in addition to the difficulty of discovering and intercepting a missile, in view of its great speed and the small area of its radar cross section, which make a missile capable of highly effective long-distance warfare. A missile also reduces the hazards facing pilots assigned the same task that can be performed with greater facility by the missile. A missile also has the advantages of flexibility of use and ease of transportation and concealment, particularly when fired from mobile launchers. The use of missiles does not call for the levels of complicated training required by pilots or for large numbers of technicians, which makes them highly effective, easily utilizable and strategically effective deterrent weapons.

**Conclusion**

7. In recent years some States in the region have acquired short-range and medium-range missile technology, as well as chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons, while others, such as Israel, India and Pakistan, have acquired nuclear deterrent capability.

8. This race to acquire such missile technology and weapons of mass destruction constitutes a direct threat, even if not in the short term, to the other States of the region that do not have this type of weapons of mass destruction and the necessary deterrent capability, and this may present an imminent threat to regional peace and security.

**Recommendations**

9. In order to live in a world free from the various forms of threat and danger, where security and stability prevail, the United Nations should play its rightful role and endeavour to create a more effective and credible mechanism for the achievement of that lofty goal, to which the majority of the peace-loving peoples and States of the world aspire. This cannot be achieved without the adoption of the following measures:

(a) Exerting pressure on advanced missile technology manufacturing States to halt the race in this area and not to export this technology to other States.

(b) Urging the States Members of the United Nations that possess chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons of mass destruction to relinquish them finally and to sign the conventions prohibiting such weapons.

(c) Calling upon those States that produce nuclear weapons to halt all kinds of activity and tests in this regard and to agree to submit all their nuclear installations, even those intended for peaceful purposes, to periodic inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

(d) Intensified monitoring of advanced missile manufacturing States in order to ascertain that they do not provide technical assistance in missile programmes to other States, particularly in regions of chronic unrest, such as southern Asia and the Middle East.

## United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

[31 May 2000]

1. The absence of international measures to curb missile proliferation is an increasing anomaly as global conventions to prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are reinforced. Proliferation of ballistic missiles is particularly difficult to curb because missiles of this type have legitimate civil use (e.g. space launches) and are already widely available.

2. The most lethal threat from ballistic missiles comes when they are combined with nuclear warheads. An estimated 40 countries possess some sort of ballistic missile, some of which are developed ostensibly for civil space launch vehicle programmes. Nineteen countries produce cruise missiles and fifty more have acquired some form of cruise missile. None of this is controlled by treaties, though the Treaty on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space prohibits stationing weapons in space.

3. Missile acquisition reflects regional tensions, particularly in areas like the Middle East and South Asia.

4. As a founding partner of the Missile Technology Control Regime, the United Kingdom remains committed to the aims of the Regime: the strict enforcement of export controls to prevent the proliferation of missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads. The Regime remains an effective non-proliferation instrument which has slowed the progress of missile programmes.

5. Further international efforts to urge and give effect to restraint should be pursued. The United Kingdom believes that these efforts should start with modest approaches, which would be built on over time.

6. Ballistic missile and space programmes are sometimes closely associated in terms of their common technology, facilities and personnel. The possibility of pursuing ballistic missile programmes under the guise of the development of satellite launch vehicles is therefore of concern. Making development of satellite launch vehicles more transparent would be a first step towards addressing more contentious issues. It would aim at providing the highest possible level of confidence that States engaged in legitimate space activity are doing just that, and not legitimizing covert ballistic missile programmes. States should also examine how to promote restraint and roll-back of military ballistic missile programmes.